



Department for Levelling Up,
Housing & Communities



Find Your Own Accommodation

Information for Afghan families in bridging hotels

Why do I need to find my own accommodation?

- Government cannot guarantee that an accommodation offer will be made to everyone because of the number of households seeking council accommodation across the UK far exceeds availability.
 - **We therefore encourage you to find your own accommodation.**
- **The Find Your Own Accommodation pathway allows you to find your accommodation with support of your council.**

Benefits of Finding Your Own Home

From today	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ You can start thinking about the areas where you want to live and your budget.
Financial help	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Your current or new council might help you with your deposit and initial rent during the early months of your tenancy. They might help you furnish your new home.✓ If you are hoping to receive financial help, do not pay anything upfront or sign a tenancy agreement without confirmation from your council.
More choice	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ You have more choice over where you live – for example, near to family and friends or in areas where you would like a job.✓ You can have more choice over the type of property, for example whether it is a house or a flat.
Same support	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ If your council agrees to support you in your new area, you will receive the same resettlement support from them, including Universal Credit, support from a Jobcentre, English language classes and help finding school places and registering with a GP.✓ You and your family can still live permanently in the UK (known as ‘indefinite leave to remain’).

Find Your Own Home: Step by Step

1

Affordability

Ask council staff in your current accommodation to help you complete **an assessment** to work out what you can afford

2

Location

Discuss possible areas to move with council staff. They will contact councils to find out whether they can help you. Not all councils will be able to support you, you may still move if you find a suitable and affordable property

3

Property Search

Start your property search in areas agreed. You should enquire about multiple properties to increase your chance of securing one. Council staff can help with this.

Find Your Own Home: Step by Step

4

Confirm Support

Tell council staff when you find a suitable property. They will let you know whether the new council can support you. If you move without support of your new council, they may not provide the services you need.

5

Moving

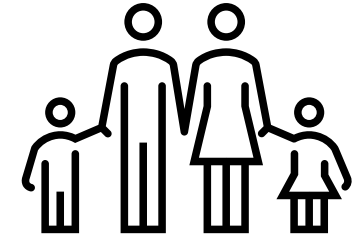
Your new council may be able to help with costs like initial rent, deposits, and furniture. They may also provide ongoing resettlement support, like helping you find a nearby school and access to medical services.

Further Information

The Home Office can help with transport to move you and your belongings to your new property. Speak to your Home Office Liaison Officer, who can arrange this for you.



What can I do next?



From today, you can do the following :

- ✓ Start talking to your council about finding your own home, where you want to live, your budget and support you could receive. You can use sights like Rightmove, Zoopla and Open Rent to look for a property.
- ✓ Read our [How to Rent Guide.](#)
- ✓ Familiarise yourself with property-search websites and speak to family and friends in the UK. Searching for more than one property at a time will increase your chances of finding a home.



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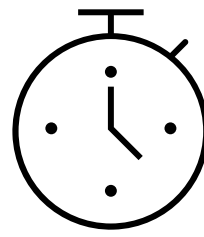
Annexes

Helpful Definitions

<u>Word</u>	<u>Definition</u>
Deposit	The money you pay when you start renting your home. The landlord must keep this safe and pay some or all of it back when you leave, unless you owe rent or damage anything.
Guarantor	Some landlords ask for a guarantor for your rent. The guarantor is someone who agrees to pay the rent and for any damages if you do not pay.
Landlord	A landlord can be a person or an organisation who owns the property and rents it out to a tenant to live in as their home
Letting agent	A business who works for the landlord, manages their property and collects the rent and other money from the tenant. They are also known as estate agents.
Privately rented property	Housing owned and rented to a tenant by a landlord or letting agency for the tenant to live in as their home.
Property	A house, flat or room which you rent from a landlord.
Social housing	Housing (sometimes called council housing) offered by councils and housing associations. There are usually long waiting lists for social housing.
Tenancy agreement	A formal agreement between the landlord who owns the property and the tenant who rents it. It sets out the terms and conditions the tenant and the landlord must keep to and gives certain rights to both the tenant and landlord.
Tenant	The person(s) who rents the property.

Social Housing

- Waiting lists are very long. In London, families are often on the list for more than **5 years**.
- Councils decide who qualifies for social housing and manage their own waiting lists, in line with government guidance.
- **Afghan families do not have specific priority for social housing**. By law, certain people must be given 'reasonable preference' when housing is allocated, including people who are homeless, are in overcrowded housing or who need to move for medical or welfare reasons. However, even those with priority for social housing may have to wait for some time for a home which meets their needs.



London Council	Number of people on waiting list (March 2021)
Newham	31887
Lambeth	30864
Brent	24002
Tower Hamlets	21152
Greenwich	19132
Islington	14164
Hackney	13440
Haringey	11640
Ealing	10875
Lewisham	10088
Southwark	10013
Merton	9125
Waltham Forest	8580
Wandsworth	8498
Redbridge	7582
Camden	7062

Social Housing: True or False?

“If I get a council property, the rent will stay the same; whereas if I get a privately rented property, the rent will increase”.

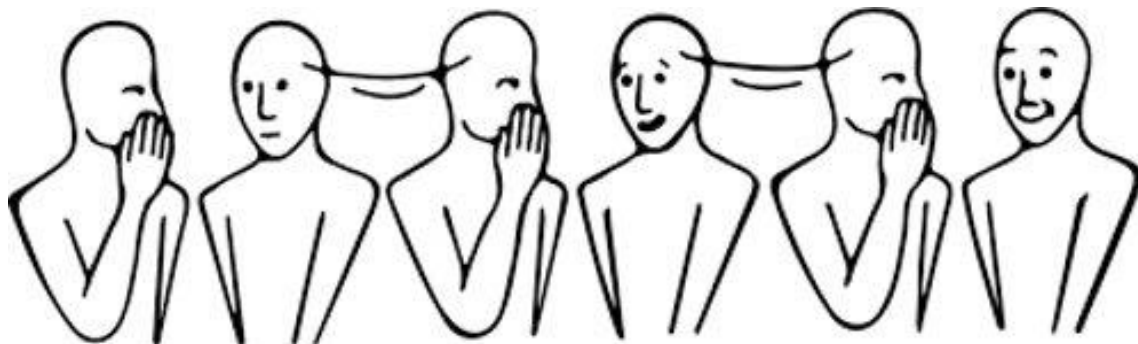


False:

Rent can increase for both private rented and council properties.

- The rent on a council property is set by a council and **normally increases every year**.
- Rent increases for a privately rented property **will depend on the type of tenancy you have**. Your tenancy agreement should contain more information on this.

You can find out about rent increases for privately rented properties at [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) or from advice agencies such as [Shelter](https://www.shelter.org.uk).



Social Housing: True or False?

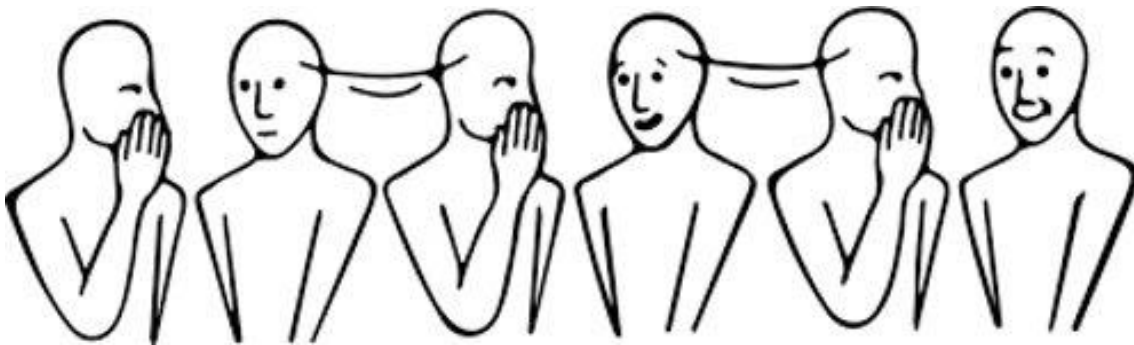
“I want a council property because I will be able to buy it after five years”



(Only very rarely) true:

Some councils may offer you a council house, but this is **extremely unusual**. Most councils will offer you privately rented accommodation.

If you are offered a council property, you may eventually qualify to buy it, **but this is not certain.**



Private Rented Property: True or False?

“My landlord can turn up at any point and kick me out of my house”.

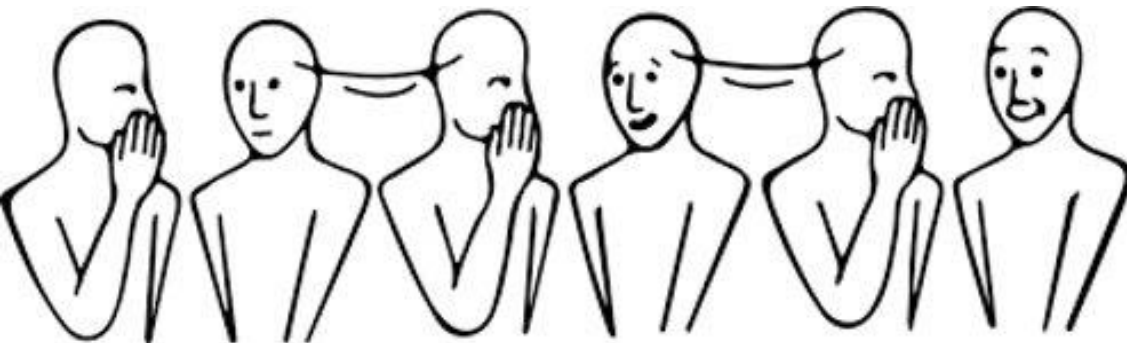


False:

You **cannot** be kicked out of a private property without warning.

There are **rules about how you can be asked to leave** a privately rented property and your landlord has to give you a certain amount of time beforehand if they want you to leave. The amount of time they give you depends on your tenancy agreement and the reason why you are being asked to leave. You can find more information at [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk).

As part of the Afghan Resettlement Scheme, the **council are responsible for providing housing support for three years**. If you are good tenants but your landlord asks you to leave, then your council will help you to find a new property to rent.



Universal Credit: True or False?

“Landlords won’t accept my application because I receive Universal Credit”



False:

No landlord should discriminate against tenants because they receive Universal Credit. ‘No Universal Credit’ (sometimes written as ‘No DSS’) policies are bans on renting to people who claim Universal Credit. **This is unlawful discrimination.**

If you see this on adverts or you experience discrimination from a landlord or letting agent, you should talk to your council – they will be able to help you complain.

Discrimination also covers age, disability, religion and sexual orientation.

You can also contact Citizens Advice for free independent advice on 0800 144 8848 or at www.citizensadvice.org.uk/ if you think you have been discriminated against.

